



Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Family Sciences

## **SOC 4015: Social Theory**

3 units  
*Fall 2024*

**MW 3 pm – 4:15 pm**

**Rohr (Sociology) Hall Room 112**

**Final Exam: 12/16 Monday 3-5pm in Canvas**

<b>Instructor title and name:</b>	Dr. Jimiliz Valiente-Neighbours (“Dr. V”)
<b>Phone:</b>	619-849-3001
<b>Email:</b>	jvalient@pointloma.edu (preferred mode of contact) I will answer e-mails between Monday-Friday (8am and 5pm). Please allow up to 24 hours for a response, and plan accordingly.
<b>Office location and hours:</b>	Rohr (Sociology) Hall Room 106 MWF 3-5pm / TuTh 1:30-2:30pm / by appointment
<b>Teaching Assistant:</b>	Sasha High, shigh0021@pointloma.edu

### **PLNU Mission**

#### **To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send**

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

### **Foundational Explorations Mission**

PLNU provides a foundational course of study in the liberal arts informed by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In keeping with the Wesleyan tradition, the curriculum equips students with a broad range of knowledge and skills within and across disciplines to enrich

major study, lifelong learning, and vocational service as Christ-like participants in the world's diverse societies and culture.

### **Department Mission Statement**

As followers of Christ, our mission is to nurture servant scholars who critically and empirically evaluate social systems, cultural patterns, and basic human needs to constructively engage as agents of hope with individuals, families, and communities.

### **Catalog Course Description**

Investigation and analysis of 19th century and more recent sociological thought, and philosophical and social issues surrounding it. The relation of sociological theory and Christian thought is considered.

### **Faculty Welcome and Course Description**

This course explores BIG IDEAS about the world around us. "Sociological Theory" is about how sociologists have explained why things happened or what may happen in the future. For example, some of the BIG IDEA questions that have been posed are: What did industrialization do to our sense of identity? What did industrialization do to our families? What did living in the city do to our relationships with strangers? What did moving into cities do to our relationship with the planet? These BIG IDEA questions and the "answers" that have been given to them may be confirmed or challenged by things that are happening today.

In this class, we will look at a handful of theorists who have tried to answer the BIG IDEA questions since the "beginning" of Sociology as a discipline. The phrase "beginning of Sociology" might have surprised you (or not), but the reason why I explicitly bring it up is to show you that there are historical, social, and structural contexts as to why ideas emerge. We will contextualize the theories that we will study, as well as the theorists who posed them. Think of it this way: what you say as your theory (or set of ideas) depends on the things that have happened in your life, where and how you were born and raised, who you interacted with, and what "time" it is/was in the world, among other things.

Sociological theory is valuable for the purpose of helping us understand the social world through multiple theoretical lenses regardless of which view(s) you might ultimately prefer. Such analytical thinking is critical for your professional and personal lives as it empowers us to move beyond the assumption that a single, ultimate explanation can be reached and to embrace the deep complexities of social life. Any background you bring to our class will enrich your individual as well as our collective experience and learning, which means that our diversity and interdisciplinarity will be strengths in this class! While this course is a requirement for Sociology majors, treat it as a course where you can generally learn more about the world and yourself!

### **Program and Course Learning Outcomes**

Program Learning Outcomes identify what students will know and be able to demonstrate in their chosen discipline upon graduation. Below are for those in Sociology.

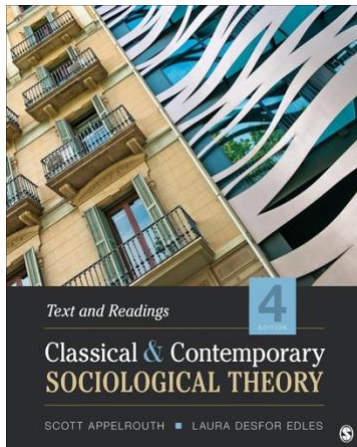
1. You will be able to analyze society, social structures, and patterns of human thoughts and behavior.
2. You will be able to navigate a world of rich cultural diversity.

3. You will be able to conduct social research.
4. You will be prepared to serve Christianly and competently in diverse vocational or social setting.

Community Learning Outcomes are statements of what students are expected to know, understand and be able to do by the time they complete the course. These outcomes are assessed by your performance in quizzes/exams, short essay responses, participation in class, and final project.

1. You will be able to identify classical and contemporary sociological theories, including but not limited to: Structural Functionalism, Conflict Theory, Critical Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, Dramaturgy, and Queer Theory, among others.
2. You will be able to describe the historical, cultural, material, and sociopolitical contexts in which these sociological theories emerged, and how they are linked to the socialization of the theorists.
3. You will be able to delve more deeply into the role of socialization agents, what they are, and how they impact individuals and groups at the micro and macro levels.
4. You will learn about the rich cultural diversity in society, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, class, gender, sex, sexuality, religion, ability, and disability.
5. You will observe the connection between these sociological theories to the importance of practicing cognitive empathy, the sociological imagination, and cultural humility and competency in diverse vocational or social settings.

## Required Text



Students are responsible for having the required course textbooks prior to the first day of class.

All supplemental materials posted on this course site (including articles, book excerpts, or other documents) are provided for your personal academic use. These materials may be protected by copyright law and should not be duplicated or distributed without permission of the copyright owner.

Your required weekly assigned readings will be from the textbook *Classical and Contemporary Sociological Theory, 4<sup>th</sup> edition* (2021) edited by Scott Appelrouth and Laura Desfor Edles, both of whom are faculty at the California State University in Northridge. Feel free to find the most accessible and affordable format.

There will also be select articles and/or chapters, available as PDFs in Canvas, to help further illustrate and illuminate course concepts. You do not need to print the articles to bring to class, but do bring your reading notes. It is important that students complete these readings before class meetings! Our class is structured in a way that while I will provide a brief lecture to review or give an overview of our readings, we will mostly have discussions or group work. In some cases, we will view films and/or have guest lectures. In all cases, the key is to be prepared and be active in our learning process.

## Course Credit Hour Information

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 3-unit class delivered over 15 weeks. It is

anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 112.5 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes. The time estimations are provided in the Canvas modules. I hope that your learning continues beyond this class, so on top of the course learning outcomes listed above, please let me know of other spiritual, service-oriented, or career-oriented goals you may have that you hope to work toward, and we can have a conversation about how you hope this class can be helpful for you.

### Assessment and Grading

ASSIGNMENT VALUES	
Attendance -miss 2 *classes, no impact -miss 3 *classes, 50% impact -miss 4 *classes, 100% impact <i>*only university-approved absences are considered excused</i>	5%
Participation	5%
Reading Responses	25%
Short Essays + Mult. Choice Exam #1	15%
Short Essays + Mult. Choice Exam #2	15%
Group Final Project Assignment	20%
Required Peer Reviews	5%
Cumulative Mult. Choice Final Exam	10%
TOTAL	100%

GRADING SCALE	
A = 93-100	C = 73-76
A- = 90-92	C- = 70-72
B+ = 87-89	D+ = 67-69
B = 83-86	D = 63-66
B- = 80-82	D- = 60-62
C+ = 77-79	F = 59 and less
<i>*There is no rounding up. Please do not ask.</i>	

### Extra Credit

Please do not ask for or rely on extra credit in this course. For equity reasons, please do not ask to earn extra points on an individual basis.

### Course Requirements

- 1. Attendance (5%).** Your regular and punctual attendance at all classes is essential for our community-building and optimum academic achievement! Being late, leaving early, or missing 10 minutes of class or more counts as an absence. Being asked to put away your electronics after class has started counts as an absence. You are welcome to TWO WELLNESS DAYS, which I recommend reserving for when you are feeling ill or need a mental health break. These two days will not be penalized. Your third absence (incl. electronic use during class or late arrival) will be reduced to 2.5%. Your fourth absence will result in 0% for attendance.
- 2. Participation and Contributions to Discussion (5%).** Students are expected to engage and participate during class lectures and discussions. Constant phone use, Smartwatch use, and laptop use will be penalized.
- 3. Reading Responses (25%).** There are weekly reading responses on the texts and theorists we cover and discuss during the week.
- 4. Short Essay and Multiple Choice Exams (30%).** There will be two of these to keep you accountable in keeping up with the readings and lectures. They will be exams in Canvas *during class time*. Late starts will be penalized. You will be permitted to use ONLY hard copies of your course notes, but not your textbook. The exam will be done through Honorlock, and you will be required to show your notes.
- 5. Final Project Video and Presentation (20%).** You will be responsible for examining a current phenomenon and analyzing it with 3-4 sociological theories we covered in class. You will need to demonstrate clear understanding of your selected theories as well as your choice of phenomenon. I am happy to share examples of previous student work to help clarify—we have

had some engaging (dare I say fun!) and critical analysis of KPop, life as a student-athlete, masculinity at PLNU, Shrek, Bluey, etc.

6. **Peer Reviews of Final Video Presentations (5%).** You and your peers will present your video during class and facilitate a Q&A about your video. You will need to fill out the peer review forms and rubrics during presentation dates to give helpful and insightful feedback for your peers.
7. **Cumulative Multiple Choice Final Exam (15%).** The exam will be multiple choice based on the readings and lectures: you will need to identify the author of a theoretical statement. Your daily reading contributions of quotes will be helpful towards this exam! You will be permitted to use **ONLY** hard copies of your course notes, but not your textbook. The exam will be done through Honorlock, and you will be required to show your notes.

## Final Examination Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Class Schedules](#) site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

## Content Warning

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. In *Sociological Theory*, all of the class content, including that which may be intellectually or emotionally challenging, has been intentionally curated to achieve the learning goals for this course. The decision to include such material is not taken lightly. These topics include racism, sexual assault, domestic violence, and violence against the LGBTQIA2+ community. If you encounter a topic that is intellectually challenging for you, it can manifest in feelings of discomfort and upset. In response, I encourage you to come talk to me or your friends or family about it. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in the area of Sociology and engaging with the social world, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

## Trigger Warning

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive several types of information. In *Sociological Theory*, we will cover a variety of topics, some of which you may find triggering. These topics include racism, sexual assault, domestic violence, and violence against the LGBTQIA2+ community. Each time this topic appears in a reading or unit, it is marked on the syllabus. The experience of being triggered versus intellectually challenged are different. The main difference is that an individual must have experienced trauma to experience being triggered, whereas an intellectual challenge has nothing to do with trauma. If you are a trauma survivor and encounter a topic in this class that is triggering for you, you may feel overwhelmed or panicked and find it difficult to concentrate. In response, I encourage you to take the necessary steps for your emotional safety. This may include leaving class while the topic is discussed or talking to a therapist at the Counseling Center. Should you choose to sit out on discussion of a certain topic, know that you are still responsible for the material; but we can discuss if there are other methods for accessing that material, and for assessing your learning on that material. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in the area of Sociology and engaging with the social world, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

## **Incompletes and Late Assignments**

All assignments are to be submitted/turned when they are due—including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances. There will be no opportunities to make up missed in-class assignments or classwork, unless you have a medical emergency or the university administration excuses you. If so, you will need to discuss with me your revised deadlines. I also understand that sometimes there is a need to reprioritize due to things beyond your control. If this happens to you, inform me immediately.

No late assignments for credit will be accepted during or after finals week, no exceptions. Please also note in that late starts past 10 minutes during exams and essays in Canvas are penalized. The percentage of penalty is contingent on the delay of the student's start time.

## **Spiritual Care**

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith. If students have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests you can contact your professor or the Office of Spiritual Life and Formation.

## **State Authorization**

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on State Authorization to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

## **PLNU Academic Honesty Policy**

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See Academic Policies for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

## **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy**

You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g, ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski) to generate ideas, but you are not allowed to use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any work submitted to be graded for this course. If you have any doubts about using AI, please gain permission from the instructor.

## **PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy**

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center ([EAC@pointloma.edu](mailto:EAC@pointloma.edu) or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation plan ("AP") that outlines allowed accommodations. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the students' request.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any special accommodations.

## **Language and Belonging**

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced a bias incident regarding language, you can find more information on reporting and resources at [www.pointloma.edu/bias](http://www.pointloma.edu/bias).

## **Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination**

In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the Title IX Office at [pointloma.edu/Title-IX](http://pointloma.edu/Title-IX). Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.



If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at [counselingservices@pointloma.edu](mailto:counselingservices@pointloma.edu) or find a list of campus pastors at [pointloma.edu/title-ix](http://pointloma.edu/title-ix).

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at [www.pointloma.edu/bias](http://www.pointloma.edu/bias).

### **PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy**

In this class, your attendance and participation will count at 5% towards your grade. You may miss two classes without impact on your grade. If you miss 3 classes, the percentage will be reduced by 50%. If you miss 4 classes, the percentage will be reduced by 100%. I will take attendance every class meeting for accountability.

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive an "F" grade. See Academic Policies in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

### **PLNU Course Modality Definitions\***

1. Online Courses: These are courses with class meetings where all instruction and interaction is fully online.
  - a. Synchronous Courses: At least one class meeting takes place at a designated time.
  - b. Asynchronous Courses: All class meetings are asynchronous.
2. Hybrid Courses: These are courses with class meetings that take place both in the classroom and online synchronously and/or asynchronously.
3. In-Person Courses: These are courses that meet in person with the instructor and students in a physical classroom setting. With approval by the area dean, this may include up to 25% of qualified class interactions through a Learning Management System (such as Canvas).

In some courses, a portion of the credit hour content will be delivered asynchronously and attendance will be determined by submitting the assignments by the posted due dates. See Academic Policies in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

### **PLNU Copyright Policy**

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.



## **PLNU Recording Notification**

To enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel.

Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

## **Use of Technology**

There are NO laptops allowed for note-taking during class meetings. Please come to class with a notebook and a pen/pencil. You may use an iPad, but note that **ONLY HARD COPIES** of notes are allowed during quizzes/exams in Canvas with Honorlock. My policy before virtual learning due to COVID has always been notebooks-only. When I allowed it one semester, the general outcomes have been disengagement, distractedness, and lower exam scores. Other faculty feel similarly and below are reasons why. Below, I included links to scholarly research to the statement.

### **Why do my fellow faculty and I feel so strongly about putting away electronics in class?**

1. Avoid zombie note-taking. Zombie note-taking does not equal learning. Instead of copying everything, synthesize what you are learning. Highlight what stands out to you. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0956797614524581>
2. Avoid distracted note-taking. When you are on your laptop or phones, it is hard not to check other things. Notifications interrupt your learning process and sense-making. [http://www.slate.com/articles/health\\_and\\_science/science/2013/05/multitasking\\_while\\_studying\\_divided\\_attention\\_and\\_technological\\_gadgets.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2013/05/multitasking_while_studying_divided_attention_and_technological_gadgets.html)
3. Avoid distracting your peers. When your peers see your online activity, it interrupts learning. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131512002254>
4. Avoid time wasted in class. Listening intently in class equates to less studying-cramming time before exams or paper deadlines. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/07/27/class-cellphone-and-laptop-use-lowers-exam-scores-new-study-shows>

## Loma Writing Center

The Loma Writing Center exists to help all members of the PLNU community cultivate transferable writing skills to engage their academic, professional, personal, and spiritual communities. We work toward this goal by conducting one-on-one consultation sessions, supporting writing education across the PLNU community, and participating in ongoing writing center research. Getting feedback from the Loma Writing Center while you're in the process of working on an assignment is a great way to improve the quality of your writing and develop as a writer. You are encouraged to talk with a trained writing consultant about getting started on an assignment, organizing your ideas, finding and citing sources, revising, editing for grammar and polishing final drafts, and more. For information about how to make in-person or online appointments, see Loma Writing Center webpage or visit the Loma Writer Center on the first floor of the Ryan Library, room 221.

- Appointment Calendar: <https://plnu.mywconline.com/>
- Website: <https://www.pointloma.edu/centers-institutes/loma-writing-center>
- Email: [writingcenter@pointloma.edu](mailto:writingcenter@pointloma.edu)

## Covenant and Community Guidelines

Consider this syllabus not as a contract but as a **covenant** among all of us. Let us build an environment that helps us all feel loved, welcomed, and challenged-supported, a balance of understanding where we are coming from as well as extending our growth zones—hard but necessary. Toward this end, let's keep in mind the following: RESPECT. What does this look like? How do we embody it?

- **Use inclusive language.** Our words have power, so let us be considerate of what we say and write and how they may impact others. Speak up/out as needed with courage, grace, and humility.
- **Give your full attention to the faculty and to your peers.** Some theologians describe prayer as attention. As we seek to become our best selves to serve God's world, let us consider how we act and interact. Put away your phones, other electronic devices, and anything that takes attention away from the task at hand, while class is in session.
- **Come to class on time, participate actively, and do not pack your materials before dismissal.** Please plan ahead in terms of looking for parking spaces or printing materials before coming to class. We will take the entire class time, so schedule other activities around our class time.
- **Be honest with your work.** Do original work and give appropriate credit to the ideas of others. This includes proper citation formats on papers/projects.
- **Say "I'm sorry for my mistake. Please teach me."** God created us to be interdependent beings—we cannot live alone and we grow to be "more perfect in God" when we learn from each other. Let us acknowledge when we hurt each other—even without the intent to—and be humble.

If you have any questions or concerns or just want to chat, please feel free to contact me by e-mail or make an appointment with me to talk during office hours. I look forward to building this learning community with you.